UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

What Jesus Learned from the Old Testament - - - - - - *Jacob Trapp*

Jesus—Without Tears - *Victor S. Yarros*

Socrates and Jesus - - - - - - - - - *F. H. Amphlett Micklewright*

What Is Personal Religion? - - - - - - - - - *Stephen H. Fritchman*

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India's Independence - - - - - - - - - *D. S. Ramachandra Rao*

The Christian and Racial Equality - - - - - - - - - *Palmer Van Gundy*

How To Read Robert Frost - - - - - - - - - *George Lawrence Parker*

The Humanism of John Cowper Powys - - - - - - - - - *Gordon Caulfeild*

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The Field

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion."

Western Unitarian Conference Program

Dates: May 6-8, 1949.

Place: People's Liberal Church, 65th and Stewart Street, Chicago.

Theme: "Disciplines for Democracy."

Program:

May 6—

2:00 p.m.—Registration.
3:00 p.m.—Alliance, Mrs. D. Gilman Taylor, leader; subject, "Solving Local Problems."
3:00 p.m.—Ministers, Dr. Thaddeus B. Clark, leader; subject, "Democratizing the Denomination."
4:30 p.m.—Business Session, President Curtis W. Reese, presiding; appointment of Committees, report of the Secretary, Randall S. Hilton.
6:00 p.m.—Dinner. Unitarian Historical Society, Western Branch, Dr. Charles H. Lyttle, presiding. Speaker, Rev. Kenneth C. Walker, Bloomington, Illinois; subject, "Unitarian Beginnings in Bloomington."
8:00 p.m.—Dr. Eduard C. Lindeman, Columbia University, speaker; subject (1) "Theories and Sources of Value for Modern Man."

May 7—

10:00 a.m.—E. C. Lindeman, speaker; subject (2) "The Democratic Pattern of Life As a Source of Values."
11:00 a.m.—"Buzz" session.
12:30 p.m.—Luncheon.
2:00 p.m.—E. C. Lindeman, speaker; subject, (3) "The Place of Democratic Disciplines in Religion and Education."
3:00 p.m.—Business Session. Report of the Committees; report of the Treasurer, Mr. H. E. Clapham; discussion of the A.U.A. resolutions.
6:30 p.m.—Conference Banquet. Toastmaster, Malcolm Knowles; speaker, Dr. George Stoddard, President, University of Illinois.

May 8—

11:00 a.m.—Conference Service, William Hammond, presiding. Conference Preacher, Rev. John W. Cyrus, Omaha, Nebraska; subject, "Popular Anxieties and Liberal Religion."

Send reservations to Mrs. Charles H. Morgan, 7923 S. Lafayette Avenue, Chicago 20, Illinois.

UNITY

Volume CXXXV MARCH-APRIL, 1949 No. 1

EDITORIAL

The American Ethical Culture Movement has been influential in the educational, social, and religious life of America out of all proportion to its numbers. This has been due to the fact that its leaders have done serious thinking on important issues, have applied ethical judgments to events and movements, and have pioneered with skill and foresight. The Ethical Movement has never gone in for sensational or flamboyant propaganda. It has made its appeal to free intelligence and the enlightened conscience. It possesses intellectual clarity, and its purposes are down to earth. It is humanistic in a broad sense, and it is a natural ally of liberals in the battle for the larger revolution in religious thought and life. To its excellent record of pioneering in the Settlement movement and in progressive education, it has recently added the significant work of its Encampment for Citizenship, where young people of all races and creeds come together for study and experience in the processes of democracy. The *Standard,* the official organ of the Ethical Movement, is a serious and dignified journal of ethical inquiry. Membership in the local societies freely crosses the lines of racial and national origin. The background and the record of the Movement are good. With such a background and record, the American Ethical Union can reasonably be expected not to become sectarian and not to rest on its laurels. It should now speedily develop a plan for championing causes in line with the humanistic trends of current thought and movements toward humanistic culture. Ethical leaders have nothing to gain by steering clear of theological controversies and they have much to give in clarifying the ethical issues involved in theological problems. It is high time for the American Ethical Union to become a forthright champion of the spirit and method of modern scientific thought and a frank opponent of outworn traditional patterns of belief. And by the same token, the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist General Convention should do likewise. It would be a pity for these three liberal movements to be left floating on an eddy while the great stream of modern life rolls on to the high seas of tomorrow.

Curtis W. Reese.

What Jesus Learned from the Old Testament

JACOB TRAPP

As the orthodox presupposition and stereotypes with which men have read the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures drop away, a grandly human and rich scripture emerges—also a great Jewish teacher or prophet, named Joshua or Yeshua, the Greek version of whose name became familiar to us in translation as Jesus. Both liberal Christian and Jewish scholars are beginning to see him in his proper setting and background as one of the great Hebrew or Jewish prophets: the last in a long line and the apex of one of the most remarkable successions of great men—Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, Micah, and the others—whom the world has ever seen.

One of the grandest fictional portrayals of Jesus ever produced came forth in recent years from the pen of a superb Yiddish literary artist and a profound scholar, Sholem Asch. His book, *The Nazarene,* is by all odds the greatest of the dozens of books of its kind I have read. It is a safe prediction that it will be translated into every major tongue spoken by man and treasured through tens of generations still to come. The product of thirty years of research plus the creative work of a literary genius of a high order, *The Nazarene* does what would seem humanly impossible. It recreates the poignantly human poet-teacher of Galilee so vividly against the background of his time, and with such grandeur of simplicity and greatness and compassionate insight and burning idealism, as to leave nothing more to be desired save by those who wish to elevate him out of his humanity. It ought to be a final answer—and someday the attitude it embodies will be—to the persistent, and unholy and superstitious, and downright silly orthodox idea, with all the vicious concomitants it has produced, that the Jews are a race accursed because they have rejected the Christ.

Sholem Asch could not have written this work had not an immense amount of historical and Biblical research been available to him from the spade-work done by previous scholars and historians. Behind a richly significant work, as behind every great man, you will find richly significant antecedents. This is the key to an understanding of the man Jesus. One does not begin to know anything about the greatness of Jesus until one first makes acquaintance with the greatness of his heritage. It would be like trying to understand Lincoln without knowing anything about the Declaration of Independence, Tom Paine, Jefferson, the Constitution, and the American dream.

The great man, as Emerson said, is a representative man. He is representative not only in that he represents an epoch in history, not only in that the inarticulate hopes and aspirations of countless others find expression in him, but also in that he has absorbed from and stands for a great heritage. Consciously and unconsciously, he has absorbed more richly than others from the heritage that shaped him. He has lived it, spoken from it and with its authority, and contributed to it the force of his own personality and the genius of his own insights. The heritage attains new life and vividness, rises to a new apex, in him.

To find a great man and to understand him, you must trace his spiritual antecedents. In the case of Jesus, who came from despised and backwoods Nazareth, this is not difficult. He was a man of simple and lowly origins, who knew no heritage but that of his own people.

In certain obvious respects this is immediately apparent. The predominant features of the cultural outlook of Jesus were also those which characterized his people's. He seems to have believed in demonology, as did his fellow-Jews. Healing the mentally and spiritually afflicted was "casting out devils." He seems to have believed in future rewards and punishments, as many of his countrymen, under the influence of Zoroastrianism, also had come to believe. He cherished with other Jews the Messianic hope that a redeemer was to free Israel from the yoke of oppression and lead her to a glorious destiny of bringing the knowledge of the true God and his justice to all nations. He seems also to have believed in a great and terrible coming day of judgment among the nations and of vindication for the faithful among his own oppressed people—an apocalyptic vision springing from Daniel and other post-exilic writings. In these ideas—all comparatively recent developments among the Jews—Jesus was a child of his time. He could no more help being influenced by them than Emerson, in nineteenth century America, could help being an individualist, and rather too much so.

In still another obvious respect, Jesus was a product of his heritage, but in a sense that no ordinary person could be—namely, that he identified himself with the greatest figures in that heritage, the prophets. They were men of such rugged individuality and grandeur of moral courage as the world has rarely seen. In that succession Jesus placed himself, or his genius put him. He was aflame with the prophets' words, which he often quoted. He was fired by their example, which he emulated.

Jesus learned, like any other boy, from his parents and in the rabbinical schools, the familiar story, the legends, the folklore, the history of his people. Here was the matchless campfire legend and folklore of the old nomadic and patriarchal days; the wonderful dignity of the story of Abraham coming with his flocks and herds into Canaan to covenant with God and make that the land of his people who were yet to be; the fascinating cycle of Joseph stories; the dramatic and forever significant story of a people's escape from bondage in Egypt. All together it was an unparalleled story of a people convenanting with God—a God who begins as a tribal deity and evolves, in the prophetic conception, to moral ruler of the entire universe. The patriotism, the ideals, the aspirations of this people were the very lifeblood of the religion which Jesus learned in his youth.

The Psalms, the hymn book of his people and beyond comparison the greatest devotional poetry of antiquity, were a part of his heritage.

He learned, as item number one in Jewish Scripture and Jewish education, the law—that law whose spirit he revered, and of which he said later, "I am come not to destroy but to fulfill."

There was a lot of democratic dynamite in the heritage of the Great Galilean.

He learned of slavery—everywhere outside of Palestine taken for granted, and of the most inhumanly brutal

and debased kind—how the laws of the Hebrew had from early times regulated it with a view to ameliorating the conditions of the slave; how every Jewish slave could claim his freedom, if he so desired, in the seventh year of his servitude, and was to be set free with recompense; how in the year of Jubilee all slaves were set free; how in the post-exilic code, obtaining in his time, the Hebrew slave was regarded as a hired servant.

He learned that the land belonged not to individuals but to God—of how, in the ancient grandeur of his people, it was to lie fallow in the seventh year, that the poor might eat from it; that usury or interest was not to be exacted from the needy, nor any of the items needed by them to be taken from them as security for a loan; that in the year of Jubilee there was to be cancellation of debts and a redivision of the land, in order that the strong, or the weak and corrupted children of the strong, should not become permanently entrenched.

He learned of the humanitarianism and profound economic consciousness of the prophets, always pleading the cause of the oppressed and the widow and the sick and the fatherless; always pressing for some kind of New Deal—for laws against unjust trading and oppression, for positive ideals of justice incorporated into the life of the people, for the conception of a Messianic Kingdom as a reign of righteousness on earth.

There is a mistaken notion among many Christians of an abrupt break between the Old Testament and the New, or, more properly, between the Jewish heritage of Jesus and his teachings as the founder of Christianity.

To get just a glimpse of how wide of the mark is that notion, let us look for a few moments at the Sermon on the Mount—a collection of the sayings of Jesus later put together as remembered, and containing presumably the core and the unique departures of his teachings.

First of all, in this grand collection, Jesus lifts up a voice of comfort for the lowly and the oppressed. "Blessed are ye poor" it begins in St. Luke's version, recalling the magnificent beginning of Second Isaiah or the "Rhapsodies of the Unknown Prophet," "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." "Blessed are the poor in spirit" or "Blessed are they that feel their spiritual need," as in the version of St. Matthew, is akin to many passages in the Psalms and the Prophets about the hunger and thirst for God.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," reflects many sayings of the poets and prophets of Israel concerning the Lord as the unfailing comforter of his people, concerning the comfort that comes to those who sincerely mourn over the iniquities and misfortunes of God's children. As we read again in Second Isaiah:

> To comfort all that mourn,
> To give unto them beauty for ashes,
> The oil of joy for mourning,
> And the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

The third beatitude is a direct quotation from the Psalms, where we read, in Ps. 34: 11, "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

So we could go on with the other beatitudes. "Blessed are the merciful." Did not the great code teach, "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt"? (Exodus 22:21) In Deuteronomy it is expressed even more emphatically: "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." This is that incredible admonition of the Mosaic code, that "Christlike injunction," as Maurice Samuels puts it, which makes the very reason for hatred and revenge, according to ordinary impulses and standards, the basis for mercy. "Because ye were oppressed"— because you know what it means to be downtrodden —"be merciful."

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness" is the passion that throbs in all the great prophetic writings.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." Had not that matchless prophet-poet written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace"?

"Blessed are ye that are persecuted" is the entire theme of Second Isaiah, with its picture of Israel as the suffering servant, destined through sufferings to bring the knowledge of the true God to the world.

From the beatitudes the Sermon on the Mount turns to the Law and its spirit and substance. Like the prophets, Jesus hates the meticulousness, the letter-by-letter exactitude and the formal legalism of the unspiritually-minded. Like the prophets he is roused to burning indignation by priestly arrogance and exploitation. Jesus sees the substance of the law in love of God and love of man, summarizing the Torah as does the prophetically revised code of Deuteronomy, and quoting its words.

There was much in the heritage of Jesus, as in any heritage of man, against extending "love thy neighbor" to include also love toward enemies and persecutors. But there was sanity in his prescription, if you think of it as a wise love that would understand the sickness of aggressors and persecutors and would bring about their cure. And there was precedent for it in "Love ye the stranger, for ye were strangers in Egypt"; in "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord"; in "If thine enemy hunger, give him meat to eat"; and in numerous passages extolling the boundless mercy and compassion of the God in whose ways men are to walk.

Jesus selected, or attracted to him by the beauty of his nature, the finest and best of his heritage, and gave it new emphasis and clarity of expression.

The Sermon on the Mount then goes on to discuss such things as anger and cursing one's brother, and oath-taking, and divorce, getting the law closer to the spirit of its fulfillment, closer to motive, closer to the new covenant written in men's hearts, as stressed by the major prophets. Jesus speaks out against ostentatious display of piety, as did the prophets again and again. He pours scornful and biting invectives, as did the prophets, upon those who wear wide phylacteries but defraud widows.

He gives a model prayer, which begins "Our Father" —a form of address to deity then in common Jewish usage. It proceeds, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," looking forward to a consummation devoutly believed in and hoped for by his countrymen. There is an old Kaddish prayer that reads, "May He who maketh peace in His heights make peace for us and for all Israel." The prayer ends with a doxology often repeated in Jewish literature and rendered in I Chronicles 24:11 as follows: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all."

One could go through the entire Sermon on the Mount in this fashion, if one had time. I do want, however, to mention its admirable summing up of the law as regards one's neighbor in the Golden Rule; and to mention that Rabbi Hillel, one of Jesus' immediate predecessors, when asked to give briefly the entire substance of Jewish law, said, "What thou wouldst not (putting it in the negative, like Confucius) that thy neighbor would do unto thee, that do not thou unto him. That is the whole Law: all the rest is commentary."

The predominant ideas of Jesus were also the predominant ideas of the other great Hebrew prophets, and may be summarized as follows:

1. *Righteousness:* That religion means essentially doing things — just and merciful things in terms of human life.

2. *Monotheism:* In his heritage was a unique development of the doctrine of a Supreme Deity, evolving from God of the Hebrew nation to sole moral ruler of the Universe — the loftiest and purest expression of an ethical monotheism to be found anywhere in the world at that time. (Parenthetically let me say here that the idea of a Trinity would never have occurred to Jesus and if it had it would have shocked him. It would never have occurred to his immediate followers, who would have been equally bewildered by it. Far from being explicitly taught, it is not even hinted at in the New Testament and was not officially formulated as Christian doctrine until the Council of Chalcedon in the year 381 A.D.)

3. A third great emphasis was a trend away from ritual cultus and sacrifice (although Jesus took part in these and did not altogether condemn them) to the humane, the moral, the social implications of religion. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God."

4. A fourth trend (even more noticeable in some of the other great prophets than in Jesus, who said he had come to save the lost sheep of Israel) was a trend away from a tribal religion, with which Judaism began, toward a religion for man as man — the beginning of a dream universal, of which Micah's famous vision was perhaps the first expression in the Western world.

5. A fifth great emphasis was the non-force philosophy: the dream of peace, the proclamation of the ideal that justice and not violence is to predominate in man's life.

These things, in part, were what Jesus learned from his Jewish heritage.

Not in detraction from him, but in honor to him, in reverence for his character and genius, I say that as a great man, as a representative man, as well as a child of his age and his people, he absorbed from it richly, as he gave forth richly.

What Jesus learned from his superb Jewish inheritance adequately accounts for his greatness.

The subterfuges of race prejudice—by which one or another tenth-rate writer has sought to account for him by giving him a few drops of Nordic blood, so-called, or by cutting him off from his Jewishness and attempting to show that he imported his wisdom from India — are too cheap to entertain in a serious discussion. Nothing could do greater dishonor to Jesus, and to the spirit of his teachings.

I think it is safe to say, on the basis of careful studies of the Synoptic Gospels, that Jesus never intended or had the remotest idea of starting a new religion. He was out to regenerate Judaism, as were the other prophets.

It was Paul the zealot, the Jewish-Greek logician, one of the greatest missionaries this world has ever seen, who, in a Roman Empire ripe for a new religion, became the true founder of what is called Christianity. In so doing he performed an immense service to which too little attention has been given. Surrounded by the constant threat of being invaded and swamped by lower cultures — characterized by polytheism, idolatry, tyrannical oppression, terrific human enslavement — the Hebrew culture sought to protect itself and got stymied in exclusiveness. It was Christianity which brought that magnificent Jewish heritage into the main stream of Western culture. It became a potent and revolutionary influence, as the Bible became the basic religious literature of the Western world.

Did you know that the Protestants were much more Old Testament Christians than the Catholics, who called them Judaizers?

Did you know that the English — whom their historian Greene calls the people of a book — got their chief ammunition in their struggle for equality before the law from the Old Testament, and that that is why Deuteronomy has been called one of the most influential books ever penned by the hand of man?

Did you know that the covenant idea of a church was first adopted in the church by the Pilgrims, and was transplanted by them to civil life in the Mayflower Compact, the first planting of democracy on these shores?

Did you know that the Hebrew Commonwealth — the Commonwealth of the people of a covenant before their age of kings — was a pattern in the mind of our Puritan forefathers? That Puritan clergymen thundered, on the basis of Old Testament texts, that God was on the side of a republic and against kings? That Tom Paine, in his *Commonsense,* the most influential pamphlet of the American Revolution, compared Israel as a commonwealth, with the most liberal code of ancient times, to Israel degenerating under a succession of kings?

The Puritans, with Bible in hand and heart, upheld the divine supremacy of law over against the "divine right" of kings.

These are but a few straws in the wind of what we ought to know about how our Judeo-Christian heritage, liberally interpreted, quickened to life, watered with the living waters of reverence for human personality and human values, the roots of democracy.

Certainly the great Judeo-Christian heritage is ours—more grandly and consistently than orthodoxy's, to whom we are not going to resign it. And certainly the effort to pluck out Judaism, and destroy it root and branch, is but the entering wedge of a barbarism that would drag down our whole Judeo-Christian heritage, along with democracy, into a new dark ages.

It is incumbent upon us — liberals, lovers of democracy and the great tradition that gave it birth — not to throw to the wolves nor to surrender to the orthodox the grandest arsenal of democracy in the world, but rather to stand together in deepening appreciation, a clearer understanding, and a more courageous affirmation of the great meanings of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

Jesus—Without Tears

VICTOR S. YARROS

Jesus, the Nazareth carpenter's son, was, of course, a man. The talk of his divinity, virgin birth, miraculous powers, must be dismissed as sheer superstition, centuries out of date. Indeed, the educated agnostic cannot even discuss this superstition with any degree of patience. It is too childish, unworthy of serious treatment.

But if Jesus was just a man, what sort of a man was he? Even Unitarians and some rationalists are disposed to "concede" that he was "perfect," in some sense, unique, peerless. These admissions are made, for example, by the eminent historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, and by John Stuart Mill. Unlike other founders of religions, who had faults, Jesus was without a moral or intellectual flaw!

What evidence is there for this estimate of the man? We know very little about him, and that little fails to support the claims made on his behalf. What we do know is derived from the four so-called Gospels, not one of which was written by an eye-witness of the events therein recorded, or shortly after the crucifixion. There is considerable doubt about the actual authorship of the Gospels. Moreover, they have been repeatedly edited and revised by pious but limited men, men who were not scholars, historians, or logicians. The spirit and methods of science were alien to them.

But let us pass over these points, important and relevant as they are to a candid inquiry into the character and personality of Jesus. Let us examine the Gospels themselves in a critical but strictly just manner. Do they warrant the assertion of many, and the admission of others, that Jesus was the most perfect man this earth has known?

It will doubtless astonish hosts of Christians, as of rationalists, to read here that the Gospels do not warrant that picture or that appraisal. Emphatically not! Either they are not read with any honest care, or else credulity, superstition, and lack of moral courage combine to render most self-styled Christians and near-Christians blind to facts and to clear testimony.

Jesus is called the Prince of Peace. What peace? Jesus preached non-resistance to evil, and Roman power was evil to the Jews. Acceptance of alien tyrannical rule meant peace, of course, but do enlightened men desire such peace and is such desire a virtue? To say, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," was to beg the whole question. The Jews and their brave and patriotic leaders denied that *any* things in their land "belonged" to Caesar. They hoped to destroy his rule, and to regain their independence. Jesus must have seemed to them a timid, weak young man, a visionary, who preferred slavery to the risk of rebellion.

This kind of peace has never commended itself to resolute and highminded men and women. It does not commend itself today. We may bless peacemakers, but they must deserve our blessing. Compromise, appeasement, surrender—and this is what Jesus preached—merit condemnation.

It is difficult to account for the blindness of so many thoughtful, educated, and sincere persons to the many glaring inconsistencies in the utterances of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. I will refer to, and discuss, only a few of these.

Repeatedly, and in various connections, Jesus reminded his followers, as well as his hostile critics and hecklers, of the commandment: Honor thy father and mother.

> For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother, and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. [Matthew.]

How did Jesus treat *his* father and mother? The answer:

> Then one said unto him, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee."
>
> But he answered and said unto him that told him, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" [Matthew.]

To refuse without reason to meet and speak to one's mother, standing outside, is certainly not to honor her, and not to obey God's commandment.

Here is another and less creditable episode. We read in John's gospel:

> There was a marriage in Cana, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus and his disciples were called to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." Jesus said unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour has not yet come."

To say to one's mother, whom one is bound to honor, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" is to insult, not honor her. All that his mother, apparently, meant to suggest is that Jesus, of whose miracles reports must have reached her, might turn water into wine for the benefit of the poor family which had no wine for its guests. And this is what Jesus actually *did,* according to the account in John. Why, then, did he rebuke and humiliate his mother in the first place, whatever he meant by the enigmatic phrase, "mine hour has not yet come"? It does not appear that, after the miracle, he begged his mother's pardon—and God's, whose commandment he had so wantonly violated!

But this is not all. In Luke we read:

> "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life, also, he cannot be my disciple."

The man who hates his father and mother violates the commandment in question, and cannot be a disciple of a master who is supposed to preach love, even of one's enemies. It is possible to devote one's life to a high mission, and to have to leave one's father and mother, and even one's wife and children, but why *hate* them? What justification is there for demanding such hate of a disciple? It just makes no sense!

There is another and graver inconsistency. We read in Matthew:

> "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.
>
> "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

But in Luke, we read a diametrically opposite version:

> "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division:
>
> "For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three.
>
> "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter. . . ."

Even in Matthew:

> "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. . . ."

If any theologian has attempted to reconcile these flagrant contradictions, I am not aware of the fact. Will some good friend remove my perplexity?

In any case no "prince of peace" can bring a sword, and glory in the fact. Peace begins at home, and he who brings bitter dissension to families is no peacemaker.

A third glaring inconsistency: The man who commands us to love even our enemies, and never to resist evil, must have suffered from a total lapse of memory and judgment when the following incident occurred:

> Jesus found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple . . . and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables. [John.]

It was natural that Jesus should object to making his Father's house a house of merchandise, but it was certainly not consistent with the philosophy of nonresistance, or of praying for one's enemies, to use a scourge to drive men out of the temple. He should have *prayed* for the money changers and merchants; he should have rebuked them, gently, not angrily. For they had the sanction of the community and of custom. Jesus knew this, of course, and had a fine opportunity for a little sermon against such habitual misuse of the temple. Instead, he lost his temper, he brandished a scourge of cords, he overthrew tables and poured out money of men who had broken no commandment. Such behavior ill becomes a perfect man!

There are other instances of irrational spite, pettiness, and loss of temper in the record, instances which the preachers discreetly ignore.

The most astonishing is that of the cursing of a fig tree by Jesus because, although "the time of figs was not yet," the poor tree had nothing but leaves for him. He was hungry, but he forgot the season, and blamed the tree, and ordered it never to bear fruit again. By the way, Santayana has resorted to vain and thin sophistry in trying to explain this episode. It simply defies reason. And why, pray, did not Jesus, the miracle worker, produce figs or other fruit by a *miracle?*

I submit, in all sincerity, that the four Gospels do not sustain the traditional and conventional claim of perfection on behalf of the Nazareth carpenter's son. The question is not whether the accounts are accurate, since we have no other accounts of Jesus. We know very little about his childhood and youth. We know nothing about his education, save that he was a child prodigy and at an early age debated theological matters with the elders and doctors of the synagogue. He probably knew no foreign language. He was a product of the synagogue. He certainly was ignorant of science and European philosophy. He had what we may call a poetic gift. He was fond of parables, and his illustrations were homely and simple. At first he doubted whether he had any special mission, but toward the end he seemed certain that he was *the* Messiah, the Savior. He predicted his own tragic end, without, however, glorying in it. He was not heroic enough, either, to endure pain and torture stoically and calmly. The cup proved to be too bitter for him.

The pious theologians do not dwell on these human, all-too-human, weaknesses, and this is natural enough, if not strictly candid.

What is here said above about the inconsistencies and contradictions of Jesus is not particularly novel or original. Scholars of independent minds have not failed to comment on them. I may refer to the French thinker, Claude Montefiori, who writes:

> What one would have wished to find in the life-story of Jesus would be one single incident in which he actually performed a loving deed to one of his rabbinic antagonists or enemies. That would have been worth all the injunctions of the sermon on the mount about the love of enemies put together.

C. E. M. Joad, in his book, *God and Evil,* quotes with approval the foregoing observation, and adds that Jesus' attitude was "anti-intellectual," and that he made no references to art, science, philosophy, or sex relations. Further, Mr. Joad recognizes, Jesus abused men of learning, denounced the critical attitude, and extolled ignorance and innocence. Some of his remarks about little children cannot be taken seriously.

Yet, the same Mr. Joad concludes his discussion of Jesus by saying that his doctrines are wise and true, "perhaps the wisest and truest that have yet been preached to mankind." There is absolutely no warrant for this amazing "admission." The extreme demands of Jesus are neither wise nor true. They could not be complied with by any civilized society. We *must* think of tomorrow; we must not depend on God to give us all we require, and renounce productive work, saving, and investment. We need our banks, our insurance systems, our corporations, our trade and commerce, our economic institutes, our cultural and social organizations. The teachings of Jesus cannot be practiced without completely destroying civilization.

Finally, let us consider Jesus' prophecies. True, even a supremely good man can make mistakes, draw incorrect conclusions from correct premises, indulge in unwarranted predictions. Goodness is not synonymous with wisdom, but Jesus is also extolled as a man of rare wisdom.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in almost identical language, report the following prediction:

> "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Just what Jesus meant by the phrase, "heaven and earth shall pass away," no one pretends to understand. He himself expected to sit, in heaven, at the right hand of God. The earth he and his followers expected to pass away, as they believed in the early destruction of the world. The world has *not* been destroyed, and its end is certainly not near, even today.

And when Jesus spoke of "all" being fulfilled during the existence of his generation, what did he mean? He had predicted "days of vengeance," great distress in the land, wrath upon its people, signs in the sun and moon, the roaring of the sea and waves, the shaking of the powers of heaven, and he had added:

> "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." [Luke.]

It hardly needs pointing out that nothing of all this occurred in his time, in the time of his generation, or of any generation since. If the earth dies, ultimately, of cold or heat, or of a collision with another planet, the men of science who predict this phenomenon, or think it probable, do *not* predict the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud with power and great glory.

Jesus, then, shared the naive notions and superstitions of his age and people. Thomas Jefferson, who accepted the quintessential ethics of Jesus, wrote of his general teachings:

> I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being.

Of course, the historicity of the Jesus of the four Gospels is debatable. I am disposed to agree with Dr.

Joseph Klausner that Jesus lived and died substantially as the Gospels tell the story, though not all the sayings ascribed to him were really his, and most of the recorded miracles were never performed or even attempted. But we are dealing with the figure presented in the Gospels, and certainly the claim of perfection, of supreme goodness, made for him by so many enlightened men, including eminent scientists, must rest on, and be justified by, the Gospel accounts. That the claim is arbitrary, gratuitous, superstitious, unwarranted by those accounts, is easily demonstrated. The foregoing is not written in malice or under a particular bias. It is written in the spirit of loyalty to truth and reason.

The Jesus of the Gospels was actually a minor Hebrew prophet. He lacked the majesty of Isaiah, the humanity of Amos, the good and practical sense of Micah. He was Utopian in his thinking. The Jews could not follow him in his fantastic moral extravagances, nor accept him as the Messiah they longed for and confidently expected.

As to the so-called Christians, they quietly ignore the extreme teachings of Jesus, give him lip service, practice a little charity, and stop there. Jesus, who hated all compromise, would have repudiated and denounced such "followers." Why cannot we clear our minds of cant, face reality, be honest with ourselves, and decently consistent? The answer is, apparently, that man is a colossal paradox. Will he ever be anything else? What, one wonders, will he be ten thousand years hence?

Meantime, let us not forget the moral progress he *has* made in a relatively short time, the science he has achieved, the arts he has evolved, the social ideals he has formed and is seeking to realize.

Socrates and Jesus

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

For modern religion, an essential problem lies in its attitude to the history of itself. If it is to preserve a sense of continuity, it must be a repository of the varied spiritual experiences of the past, seeking to adjust those experiences to the intellectual and moral atmosphere of the contemporary world. In no other way can it blend into one wholeness the contrasted elements of tradition and creativeness which it is the part of religion to nurture. It is thereby brought face to face with the question of the activity of God throughout history as it has been seen in the Christian theology of the past and also beyond its borders. Both Socrates and Jesus are significant to its background, for the religious inheritance of the twentieth century is the heavy debtor to both Jew and Greek. Yet, for the free religionist of today, the final significance of both Socrates and Jesus lies in their underlying spirit and attitude, the sense of reverence from which faith springs as an emotional and a logical process. The relevance of both figures lies here and not in any particular outward manifestations of this spirit that they may have exhibited.

The Greek was a noble humanist; his sense of humanism bridges the centuries from Socrates until the sun of Greek philosophy set in the magnificent cloudland of Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists. He had achieved a conception of love, *eros,* as something springing forth from the heart of man yet capable of pointing beyond time and space to an eternal truth, beauty, and goodness, summed up and realized in a Divine Love underlying all things. The long legacy of a humanism of this type within both culture and religion has been the Greek contribution to the spirit and mind of man in every succeeding age. For the Hebrew, the questions of reality had taken a very different course, shaped by the desert and the upheavals of Israel rather than by the educational background of Greece. Ultimate Love, *agape,* was something projected into man from without by the stark and arbitrary will of a transcendent Yahweh. The quieter doctrines of the Greek did not exist; the God of Israel was a God of fire and storm. It was not for man, by searching, to find out God; the significant moment came when God sought and found sinful man. The world has inherited this Jewish conception from the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and there has been a constant struggle within Christianity to reconcile the two approaches.

In primitive church history, they were reconciled by a translation of Christianity into Greek terms. For example, Christian tradition took over Greek methods of allegory and applied them to the Old Testament. It adopted the Greek interest in definition and intellectual speculation with the result that it became the disciple of Socrates rather than of Jesus, a point which Dr. Hatch emphasized in his *Hibbert Lectures for 1888,* a classic work on the subject. To Justin Martyr, the problem was easily resolved; Socrates and Plato were Christians before Christ. Some writers, such as Clement of Alexandria, accused the Greeks of stealing their thoughts from the prophets of Israel. Pagan controversialists retorted in kind and claimed that the teaching of Jesus was but a coarser mode of expressing the truth to be found in Socrates and Plato; Socrates had given an example of turning the other cheek long before it occurred in the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek view triumphed. Its interest in speculation led on to the evolution of an intellectual orthodoxy embodied in the creeds of Christendom; its stress upon man and upon the natural order evolved Catholic ideas of sacramentalism. The later Protestant reaction was largely a rejection of the Greek triumph and a recovery of Old Testament conceptions of a sharp division between God and man.

For modern religion, a great issue lies in the questions raised by this cleavage of thought. From Socrates, the world has derived a viewpoint concerning which the New Testament is strangely deficient. To the Greek, the virtues of intellect occupied an important place in his moral scheme. Human effort and the intensity of upward struggle through a coordination of mind

and will are fundamental to his attitude. The sincere disinterestedness of moral goodness was linked by Socrates to his search for intellectual truth. In the end, it was this quest which was to lead him to martyrdom because he had challenged the popular intellectual definitions of God in the interest of a greater moral vision of Deity.

Apart from questions of theological difference, the stories of Socrates and of Jesus possess close parallels. The Gospel narratives have been heavily colored and distorted by later apologetic motives but, shining through, is the implication that Jesus revived and strengthened the testimony of the prophets of old and sent forth the message of a Divine transcendence which had once been upon the lips of an Amos or an Isaiah. His prophetic preaching awoke response and thereby invaded those territories of vested interest within Jewish ecclesiasticism which had deserted the message of the prophet for the priestly cultus. Because Jesus had challenged the popular idols in the interest of a higher truth, he fell a victim to theological hatred and, like Socrates, became a martyr.

Even if the legacies derived from the two figures have tended to diverge as a result of intellectual speculation, there is a fundamental unity of approach underlying the stories. In both cases, there is the active realization of a Spiritual Reality transcending the limits of popular conventional definition. The ecclesiastical view of Jesus Christ was the result of an adoption of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth and of an encasing of that figure within a rigid dogmatic framework, derived in part from the Judaism inherited from St. Paul and, in part, from a credalism springing forth from Greek speculation as Hellenism conquered the young church. The dogmatic framework has done much to discredit religion within a changing world. Not only can it be shown to be the accumulation of many mythologies but it is also, as Charles Voysey never tired of urging, morally objectionable to any sensitive conscience which is forced to repudiate eternal penalties for temporal unbelief or the moral worth of a complaisant acceptance by God of innocent sacrifice as a conscious and acceptable substitute for the guilt of sinful man. Its ill-balanced morality has driven some, like Robert Burns, to cynicism and others, such as Shelley, to a violent repudiating of its God as a black fiend. An unfortunate sign of modern Protestantism is that, under the psychological stress brought about by two World Wars, it is anxious to proclaim the discrediting of the humanism derived from Greece and to recover the dogmatic framework derived from an over-stressed belief in Divine transcendence which can only create once again a similar dogma of atonement to that which has defaced Christian orthodoxy and brought about far-reaching moral revulsion, a trait seen in the outburst of the Boer lad in Olive Schreiner's *Story of a South African Farm:* "I love Jesus but I hate the other one!"

The need for a recovery of balance between the two conceptions, together with the active understanding that the world's religion owes vast and lasting debts to both Socrates and Jesus, enforces the realization that a valid religious sense is wider than any one tradition or definition and that it may be found wherever man is seeking the highest which his mind can know or his conscience approve. Both Socrates and Jesus have left a lasting impress because they represent a sense of the reality of the Eternal within a world of time. Jew and Greek do not meet within the artificial reconciliations of early Christian authors; it is clear that both Origen and Celsus were entirely wrong in their claims concerning the relationship. Their fundamental reconciliation lies in the contributions which they have to make as a result of a common spiritual interpretation of the universe. Socrates can teach the New Testament writers concerning the worth of intellectual questing as a moral virtue; Jesus can remind the Greek of the smallness of man when faced with Eternal issues and yet of the power of creativeness lying within the spirit of man when it reaches a harmony with "a Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." If the world needs the intellectualism of Greece as its salvation from the morass of irrationalism into which it is in danger of plunging, it likewise needs the stress laid by Jesus upon the weakness of the individual will and its constant need of strength from on high in order that it may pursue a steady moral orientation.

It may well be that the modern world has to answer in the affirmative the old Hebrew question: Can man by searching find out God? Stark views of the Divine transcendence need to be exchanged for the attitude of Ralph Cudworth that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." The sphere of mind and the moral virtue of knowing needs to be given a more prominent place than it occupies within the New Testament. But man likewise needs the direction of his whole personality towards God, the purpose of a faith which is the foremost characteristic of the teaching of Jesus. He cannot do without the sense of moral reverence which underlay every dealing of Jesus with his fellow men. Greek traditions within Christianity have suffered because they have been worked up into credalism and thereby into doctrines concerning the Sonship of Christ or of the exact meaning of the Trinity which have lost all relevance and meaning for the present day. The Jewish strain derived from Jesus has likewise suffered because it has been turned aside into an emphasis upon blood-atonement inherited from the burnt offerings of the Jerusalem temple. Yet both elements embody spiritual instincts which ring true to the need of man in every age, a sense of the integrity of his own personality together with a sense of his own powerlessness and reliance upon a Final Reality lying beyond time and space.

Modern religion has the task of surveying these age-long heritages as they have been derived from their outstanding teachers. If it has a considerable negative task to perform in sweeping aside many of the intellectual cobwebs which have draped themselves around the historic figures, it must also seek to dig out the elements of positive worth in their teaching as presenting two sides to one vast problem. Its function is not that of an artificial intellectual reconciliation between the more humanist teaching of a Divine immanence and the strongly emphasized Theism of a philosophy of transcendence, still less must it follow much modern Protestantism into a solution of its psychological difficulties by denying immanence and accepting transcendence as an arbitrary act of intellectual choice which can never be more than a perversion of the true function of faith. Having inherited the spirit of both Socrates and of Jesus, it has the duty of exercising upon both spiritual traditions the sense of creativeness, thereby presenting the positive attitude of Jew and Greek as permanent and coordinated approaches to the religious quest which is continued throughout every age.

What Is Personal Religion?

STEPHEN H. FRITCHMAN

Nowhere do cliches rule the minds of men more than in a discussion of "What is meant by personal religion?" The great difficulty is to get down to realities and honest talk. There is an illusion popularly believed that Unitarians have no personal religious life, that they are entirely preoccupied with social reform and remaking the world. Without minimizing for a moment the importance of prophetic religion with its emphasis upon brotherhood and the challenge of a far from finished world, I would emphasize today the sources of power for making such a brotherly world, sources to be found in personal religion.

Too often the phrase "personal religion" suggests family prayers, Bible reading at the dinner table, conversions at a revival meeting and other activities associated with evangelical Christianity. Without criticizing these disciplines as such, it would be well to remind ourselves that all religion is personal. It is not a monopoly of Christianity. There is no more personal religious statement than Gautama Buddha's "Let us speak the truth, yield not to anger, give when asked even from the little that we have. By these three things shall we enter the presence of the Gods."

There is no point where the differences between a religion of fear and a religion of freedom are more clearly observable than in a discussion of personal religion. I call myself a naturalist or a Humanist in religion and as such would stress the role of the spiritual life in a modern interpretation of religion. There is nothing more intensely personal than the experience of growing out of an infantile dependence upon a personal God into a strong firm self-reliance on one's divine resources as a creature of mind and spirit. The crutches and braces and canes of immature religion are thrown away.

A religion of fear makes demands upon individuals by insisting upon a neurotic preoccupation with their salvation. Will I be saved? What assurance have I that I will enter the gates of heaven? Millions of good men and women have tortured their minds and destroyed their health over such fears and doubts, deliberately and calculatingly engendered by theologians and evangelists. A religion of fear encourages attitudes of alarm, uncertainty, verbal orthodoxy, and urges the believer to look to God for the answers to problems we should solve for ourselves. Fear in religion makes men craven dependents upon a supernatural God instead of mature and forthright creatures of dignity and reason in a world of available knowledge and experience. A religion of fear makes men crawl before an Oriental potentate called God, not walk with pride and joy on this great planet, our unfinished homeland.

A religion of freedom despises the ignominy of the slave mind, which surrenders thought, deflates obligation to one's fellow men, and weakens responsibility to the world around us, by emphasizing the heavenly destination rather than the present duty. Such religion frustrates the maturity we should rejoice to grasp. It is for these reasons that I despise revivals with their flagrant contempt for reason, with their stimulation of emotionalism in the name of God's grace. Having attended revivals since I was fifteen years old, I know what revolting spectacles they can be in a modern age where, if we choose, we can know better than to assault the spirit of man with such indignities. I cringe at Salvation Army street meetings with their drum and bugle call. The will is often fine, but I cannot forget the implied insult to a man in offering him salvation with a bun and a bed. It is a ghastly commentary on our failure to feed and educate and train for useful service, in a world of plenty, the meanest and most humble of our citizens. Personal religion is caricatured by such experiences.

There is no religion but personal religion. The forms may vary and the words be different . . . but religion is one's personal grasp, understanding, and participation in the life of the spirit. This involves our own ego, our soul, our mind, our emotions. It involves the people near us and people far away whom we may never see. It involves our sentiments toward all mankind and our response to the universe about us so mysterious at times. Personal religion may be superstitious, irrational and even immoral in its contempt for maturity and independence, or it may be reasonable, adult, and responsible. Personal religion need not involve credulity, suspension of intelligence, believing what is not so, surrender to alleged supernatural powers. It need not involve acceptance of the infallibility of Pope or Bible or the parson on Main Street.

Erasmus and Emerson had personal religion with self-respect. Buddha, Maimonides, Hillel, Tagore, Asoka, Tolstoy, Jefferson, and thousands of others have maintained their full powers of humanity and still testified to the strength and inspiration of personal religion. Personal religion for the free mind implies certain postulates which I should at least like to mention. First it assumes we are all ultimately dependent for our existence upon forces and processes of nature not of our own making. We are beings living in nature and dependent upon her. The study and appreciation of this relationship of man to nature is the heart of personal religion. Matthew Arnold sensed it when he wrote: "One lesson Nature let me learn of Thee—of toil unsevered from tranquility. Calm soul of all things, make it mine to feel amid the city's jar that there abides a peace of thine, man did not make and cannot mar."

Second, personal religion provides us with the assurance that there is a meaning to be found on this planet. It is to be found in the flowering plant, in scientific research, in struggles for brotherhood across the continents, in the meeting of minds in serious conversation, in the loyalty of friends even to the prison cell and gibbet . . . to be found wherever "spirits with spirits meet." The traffic of sensitive minds, the common tasks of families and neighbors, the alerting of conscience, the shaking off of lethargy and cynicism—in these things we find personal religion. Through books and paintings, through symphonies and conversations, through love and controversy and meditation we become refreshed and elevated in our hopes and possibilities. Whether the means are organized and disciplined or whether they come as the moving of an unexpected wind across the field of grain, it is personal religion for free minds. It is not required that it happen at a prayer meeting or at the Bible class, though it has even happened there again and again, with searching spirits at work.

The third postulate of personal religion is that the human spirit is born to freedom and resists tyranny as

a plant resists a stone by surrounding or cracking it. The perverse insistence upon integrity, independent thought, responsibility is the heart of personal religion. This is the sacred thing. The true Shekinah, the holy of holies. It requires no priest to mediate it, no relic to prove its presence, no baptism to assert its achievement. Men will die for the strange but insistent love of freedom, that invisible and undefinable hunger to use the imagination and the power of reason. The employment of this freedom is the heart of personal religion.

The fourth postulate of personal religion is that one's private peace cannot rest without participation in the making of a good community. The ethics of responsibility are inevitably intertwined with the personal values of high religion. Community means justice, fair play, decency; and no personal religion prospers which for long ignores these values as central. This love of community is symbolized in the Good Samaritan, in the prodigal son, in Prometheus the fire bringer, in Buddha pronouncing the eight-fold path. Personal religion makes us sense the network of relationships that bind men of good will together. Personal religion, contrary to much popular misconception is not for hermits and anchorites, it is not for Simeon Stylites, not for monks and recluses; it is for men and women in the world of activity. It provides us with the power to evaluate, the skill to plan for the future, the method to enjoy the glory of the lighted mind. This kind of personal religion allows for change and growth in customs and mores. It encourages the process of human evolution and resists the temper of the dogmatist and the paralysis of the frightened soul. Traditional personal religion stressed anxiety; natural and humanistic religion stresses hope and confidence. Traditional religion spoke of another world; natural religion accepts this one. It scorns the preoccupation with passports and visas to another world while this one remains so challenging to the powers of humanity. With Walt Whitman we say, "Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes." We can live without alarm and without panic, certain that goodness will survive over fear and hate and prejudice. There can be no better society with puny men at the helm, so let us discover the importance of personal religion, the renewing power of the inner life, the sustaining resourcefulness of a mind established and resolved. Such religion will not be broken when the lightning strikes and the floods come. Its power is written in history and its strength is known to all who choose to find it. Let it be said in trumpet tones, there is no contradiction between progressive living and personal religion. They are two sides of the same coin.

The Church of My Dreams

RANDALL S. HILTON

I see a church, a church beautiful, a symphony of design, warm and comfortable inside, music filling the air with stirring harmony, a pulpit raising the sights where thought is expressed with candor and without fear.

I see a church, a church of fellowship, where men mingle for a moment in thoughtful meditation, or discuss with mutual respect things trivial, things important; where democracy is not just a theory but a habit of practice in both attitude of mind and in the spirit of comradeship.

I see a church, a friendly church, where all men are brothers and of equal concern to each and to all others; where men and women of many races and nations, unaware of their origins, are concerned with their common welfare.

I see a church, a church alive, alive with the dissonant sounds of many voices, the soft and quieting tones of sagacious age, the firm resonance of middle life, the vibrant incantations of youth, the shrill shrieks of children, deep sighs and raucous laughter.

I see a church, a church of action, where men and women learn to put their principles into practice in the market place and in the home; where convictions find expression in conduct, and faith is demonstrated by deeds; where all are willing workers, and responsibility is genuinely shared.

I see a church, a church with its doors eternally open so that people may go in and out daily, not only for meditation and prayer, but also for the purposes of learning, of discussing, of arguing; where mind may clash with mind, thought be sharpened, understanding deepened, and action intensified.

I see a church, a challenging church, where children grow naturally in appreciation and understanding of the complexities of life; where youth finds its ideals encouraged and strengthened; where middle life stops short of compromise and is not synonymous with the middle way; where old age finds not only comfort but security and joy in the knowledge that new faces, new occasions, new duties give promise of greater good to come.

I see a church, a circle of friends, a fellowship of people, where the smallest child and the college youth both feel at home; where the laborer, the white-collar worker, the executive, the entrepreneur and the college professor stand side by side united in their determination to make the community and the world a better and more peaceful place in which to live.

I see a church, a church of the liberal faith, where minds are free, fellowship is real, and all its members are persons of character—devoted, loyal, and generous in deed as well as in spirit—a thinking church, an acting church, a growing church.

This is your church if you want it.

India's Independence

D. S. RAMACHANDRA RAO

A strange feeling of contentment and joy possessed me as I woke up on the morning of August 15, 1948. That midnight hour, the transition period between the end of the 14th of August and the beginning of the 15th, I spent in speeding the departing hour of foreign domination and in welcoming the dawn of freedom! I was then within reach of Delhi and could hear on the radio in clear accents *"Vandemataram"* sung by Mrs. Sridharini Kripalani with her inimitable charm, heralding the assumption of the sovereign powers by the Constituent Assembly of India. Dewan Chamman Lal announced one by one the several items on the program. Babu Rajandra Prasad in dignified terms accepted full responsibility on behalf of the Constituent Assembly, while Pandit Nehru in brave, manly, joyous words assumed the role of administration as the first Premier of the Dominion of India. Finally Dr. Radhakrishnan in an eloquent and thrilling speech gave expression to the pent-up joy of India at the transference of power into the hands of her sons and daughters. It was indeed a glorious and unforgettable function!

Tired out with the day's excitement and the midnight vigil and with a heavy heart, conscious of the responsibility of the new-born freedom, I went to bed along with the rest of India. Mother nature came to my aid and sleep supervened. Physical repose and mental inertia had made me oblivious of what had happened only a few hours before. As I woke up it seemed, for a brief while, as though the old conditions continued. It was not easy to realize that the country had arisen to freedom with the glow and splendor of the rising sun. Like a bird in the cage I was inclined to sing in my captivity. But with a start I realized that the cage door was wide open and I was perching on the twig of a huge tree far away from the cage. The bars of the cage had dropped on the ground one by one. The old domineering personalities had vanished into the mists of the past. I was left alone to think, plan, and do just as I pleased. The old shackles had fallen off my hands and feet, and the steel wrenched out of my soul. I was a citizen of a free nation with all its implications! The galling sense of belonging to a subject race had been wiped out, and I stood erect and looked boldly into the faces of free men and women the world over. A complete transformation had taken place in my psychology, and it needed an effort to understand it and become aware of the new complex that permeated my being.

Despite the ridicule of political opponents, the taunts of skeptics, and the grave shaking of heads by well-meaning friends, I have in my own humble way carried on political work for well-nigh forty years, not only in this country but also in Britain and the United States. A sense of joy unspeakable swept over me as I slowly realized that the labors of hundreds and thousands of workers all over the country had not been in vain, but had borne fruit at long last!

It is only those who have yearned for freedom and risked everything for its attainment who can realize its worth when it comes to them in an unexpected way. In fact, it is those who have gone abroad who can gauge the depth of humiliation of belonging to a subject race. Sympathy—there was plenty of it from the outside world for India, but it was tinged with pity and contempt for the state of affairs in which 400 millions of human beings—heirs of an ancient civilization—allowed themselves to be helplessly ruled by a few hundred British officials backed up by an army scarcely sufficient to garrison a third-rate European State! "The Orientals are Orientals, after all; they love to be ruled by Europeans," they said, and giggled and sighed. It was that sting going into my heart that made me join the ranks of those who fought for the freedom of the motherland.

The advent of Mahatma Gandhi into public life rallied all the national forces in the country under one banner. Some spade-work had no doubt been done by the Bengal National Movement since the days of Arabindo Ghose. The national enthusiasm then generated in the country was brought to a focus by the intrepid political maneuvering of Lal Lajpati Rai in the Punjab. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's challenge to the British Government in the form of Responsive Cooperation had kept the political activities going; his declaration that *"Swaraj* is my birthright" had indeed been adopted as a slogan all over the country, and it kept the embers of nationalism glowing far and wide in an honest attempt to win *Swaraj*. Unfortunately he died in harness, leaving the country to its fate. But a new ray of light shimmered on the political horizon, trying to dispel the darkness and despair caused by the untimely death of Tilak. Gandhi sprang into the vacant seat of leadership, his name redolent with the fame of achievement in South Africa. People wondered whether he would ever prove to be the second best to the sadly missed hero of Maharashtra. Fortunately the British Bureaucrats in India followed the policy of ruthless represssion in dealing with the agitation engineered by the Congress to demand *Swaraj*.

Coming as it did in the wake of the first World War it stung India to the quick. Since base ingratitude, arrogant racial prejudice, and clear indication of domination prevailed in Britain's dealings with India, in spite of her invaluable loyal services to the Allied Cause in the great World War, it came as a conviction that Indians could no longer take things lying down. The aftermath of war had whipped up the flagging energies of the nation. It just needed a leader who could focus the pent-up feelings of national self-respect and direct it into the *Swaraj* channel. The old methods of work had lost their edge and new ones had to be mobilized. A message of hope and inspiration to the distracted and disillusioned millions seemed imperative at the time. Gandhi happened to be the man who could do the task. Besides, the bureaucratic blunders clinched the issue in his favor as the supreme leader!

When Gandhi started the political game enunciating the policy of non-cooperation with the British Government, friend and foe alike thought that it was an *impossible* ideal! But he would have his way since he knew its technique better than any of his followers. When he propounded the economic doctrine of the *Charka,* and declared that he would pit it against the tanks and cannons of the most powerful and mechanized colonial government in the world, the wise men in the East and the West thought that it was the limit,

and whispered that much musing had made him crazy. When finally he attempted to spiritualize politics and inculcated non-violence toward the enemy, Christendom scoffed at the heresy and put him and his followers behind iron bars! Still he trusted in God and hoped that the righteousness of his cause would make it prevail. He had faith in his country that it would be absolutely non-violent in the struggle, and use all its soul-force in the attainment of its end. He had faith also in Britain that she would respond to the moral appeal of India and let her have her due!

It was a long-drawn battle from 1920 to 1947, with vicissitudes of fortune, the soul-force of India being marshalled against the brute-force of Britain. India's non-violent mass effort to obtain her national freedom prevailed against the bureaucratic efforts to crush it. India's demand in 1942 that Britain should quit India was acceded to by Britain in 1947. Just a short time ago everything looked gloomy, and a final struggle with determination to fight to the bitter end seemed inevitable. But at the last moment the sky cleared and everybody saw the obvious; the irreconcilables became reconciled. Britain had nobly played the game! India's freedom was won without a drop of British blood being spilt. An inspiration to the world! Our freedom is God's Mysterious Gift!

The Christian and Racial Equality

PALMER VAN GUNDY

After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison gas.

These words of the atheist and pessimist, Thomas Hardy, in one of the bitterest moods of his disillusioned life, well express the attitude of many humanitarians today toward the Church—Protestant and Catholic alike. In a similar mood Negro Christians in America might say:

Countless years of pious exultation
Have brought us only want and segregation

This conception of religion as something unrelated to the welfare of people, so assiduously promulgated by the Communists, is of course a dangerous half-truth. Like all half-truths, it conveniently overlooks the other side of the picture— the sincere and intelligent efforts of many churches, Negro and white alike, to render service to the physical as well as the spiritual needs of humanity without respect to race or religion. However, it does point to a truth which is no half-truth: namely, that too many churches are so concerned with the so-called spiritual needs of the community, or more often of a mere segment of the community, that the total needs of the total community are forgotten.

In no field of contemporary life is the discrepancy between Christian ideals and practice more glaring than in that which for want of a better term is called race relations. "Christian" churches which in intent or effect are for white only, "Christian" peoples living on restricted real estate, "Christian" hospitals and schools from which Christians are excluded solely because of their color, "Christian" employers denying to qualified workers of certain races one of the most basic of all rights, the right to work for a living on equal terms with other workers—these and the attitudes which give rise to them are sin.

In the face of this sin—the sin of segregation, which eats at the heart of American Christianity like a cancer—can anyone deny the need for a rebirth of the spirit of Christ in the churches today on a scale more vast and profound than is commonly dreamed of by ministers when they preach revival?

Surely there is such a need. But if this rebirth in spirit is to take form something more is required. To make the Christian ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man operative in church and society, the Church must go much farther than merely to cleanse itself in heart. It must go even beyond the elimination of segregation from its own institutions. To effectively challenge the racist practices of a pagan society, the Church must take political action.

By taking political action I do not mean that the Church should enter the field of partisan politics. Nor do I mean that the Sunday morning service should be turned into a forum period for political debate. No worship service is worthy of the name which does not stress prayer and consecration and the renewal of the participant's moral and spiritual energies through direct association with God. I mean that the Church as a whole should study the problem of discrimination in all its devious manifestations and then organize its full strength to fight this evil by direct political action.

Before this can be done, of course, a great many more ministers must come to see that racial discrimination is sin because it means doing unto others as we would not have them do unto us. They must realize also that any form of segregation is sin; for, argue the matter as you will, *segregation is discrimination.* Who among *us* would accept segregation? Who among us would accept even the "separate but equal" status persistently advocated in segregationist theory yet completely forgotten in actual practice? In addition Christian leaders must awake to the fact that segregation is sin because it destroys human personality and blights lives. It is sin for the same reason that drunkenness and immorality are sins; it harms the most precious thing in the world—the mind and heart of man, made in the image of God.

When the Church really comes alive to the issue of segregation versus Christ, it will take political action. It will take it as only the Christian Church can when it comprehends the challenge to its ideals by a pagan society. Then resolutions against racial restrictive covenants or in favor of F.E.P.C., passed in secret and timidly announced, *will not be enough.*

No pastor will be satisfied until every member of his church is praying and working for Christian equality. No pastor will be content to let his congregation form its opinion of the recommendations of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, for example, by what is printed in the daily newspaper or broadcast over the radio. He will obtain copies of this report, perhaps the most momentous document of its kind since the Emancipation Proclamation, and see that his

parishioners read it and digest it. Discussion groups will be formed, but even these will not be enough. Petitions will be circulated. Letters to Congressmen and state legislators will be written. Finally, if this fails, new Congressmen and new legislators will be elected. They will be men and women who have been shown in the only way they understand that at long last the Church is going all-out on Christianity. They will know that the Church means to make the ideals of its founder felt in the field of practical human relationships, where he lived and moved and set his example for all humanity.

How To Read Robert Frost

GEORGE LAWRENCE PARKER

Apparently Robert Frost is the last poet who needs to say to us, "Here is how to read me." Certainly he never hints at such a necessity. The most casual reader can say, and say quickly: These poems are plain, simple, visible pictures of New England. Here are the well-known stone walls, the equally well-known stony characters; suppressions of personality that jut up out of a deep and earthy reality, showing only the pointed peak of themselves to our observation. Here are quirks and turns of speech that taunt us with a clipped-off meaning that makes us wish it would stay awhile until we unravel it.

And with this truncated personality of the New England people there mingles also the strange winsomeness of a biting-off climate, a weather which like a thoughtless woman follows up her wooing with cruel and crushing wounding. All of this anyone can find for himself in Frost's poetry. Discovering it he is apt to say: This is all clear and understandable enough. No great subtlety here. These are true and, on the whole, attractive and genuine pictures of old New England; but also quite as truly they do not deeply stir or interest me. Filled with the sufficiency of their easy surface, I pass them by because they leave with me neither a modern problem to solve nor a soul mystery to fathom. Since, then, there is here little of supersensuous snarl and little of ancient myth, Frost's poetry is a series of cartoons, bucolically appealing but not needing much explanation.

But this easy verdict calls for correction—examination at least—at several points. I have found and am finding hosts of even New England readers who find for themselves very little in Frost but who, once a slight clue is given to them, rejoice in the gleam of a new discovery. It dawns upon them that Frost talks with and to himself almost as definitely and as often as he talks to us, his readers. His asides are as important as his frontal lines, and indeed sometimes more real. What is addressed to us, plainly aimed at us as listener and receiver, is often less incisive, less suggestive, less biting and stirring to the mind than what he says to himself.

For instance, take the prefatory poem in *North of Boston* called "The Pasture":

> I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
> I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
> (And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
> I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

The line in parentheses is the significant one, the bell sheep of the little quartet. It is said under his breath. The clearing of the spring is a commonplace job, not very romantic, not crowded with possibilities of any sort; it will not take long to do; custom has robbed it of all surprises. But there is just the chance, just the faintest chance, that "I may wait to watch the water clear." On that yet undecided probability hangs a whole universe of likely surprises. The very possibility that I, he, may decide to wait to watch the water clear or may decide not to do so is a choice of some distinction. To hold it in balance in my mind, as I wet my hand up to the elbow and grasp the decaying, floating leaves, is a hesitation that gives birth to dream and vision. A fateful "I may" or "I may not" confronts me as I stoop over this old half-choked water hole! If I stay I may see a late afternoon shadow flit across the tiny pool as meaningfully as a conquered grief flits across a human face. I may see a star of early autumn dusk pierce into the dark spring's bosom as a new hope may bite and sting its way into a soul's despair, bringing courage and aspiration. If I stay I may see the soft heart of the spring snuggle down into a peace that defies my raking and bids me not think that I can easily and rudely rob it of its eternal rights.

But if, on the other hand, I turn away and do not "wait to watch the water clear" I may, homeward bound, meet even greater destinies and opportunities. There may be a telephone call that will change the whole tenor of my life, an old friend waiting for me with inspirations from a far country called memory, some argosy long counted as lost now returning, "safely come to road." Something new and hidden, something greater than the clearing of the pool may reward my decision not "to stay to see the water clear." It is after all a weighty decision; but Frost leaves you and me to say so; he will not tell it to us.

He leaves it wrapped up in his aside, his parenthesis. This is Frost talking to Frost rather than to you or me. He is conversing with the deeper man beneath himself. And the fascinating thing about it is that he makes no dark secret of this process of appeal. He seems to think that it is perfectly natural in everyone, that the most commonplace individual becomes endlessly interesting if once he will let other people see the inner machinery beneath the outer; let others see, in a flash not too bright, the self-spoken convictions and hesitations that make us what we are. I once heard Frost in one of his public lectures start to repeat one of his own poems. He got stuck on the sixth or seventh line, hesitated, put his finger in his mouth like a schoolboy and said with a schoolboy face to his audience, "Wait a moment, I've got to shift my scenery." Then we almost heard the shifting itself. He looked up, smiled again, and the forgotten poem went on to its arresting conclusion, all the more arresting because he had let us see how he did it.

This shifting of scenery is never absent from Frost's poems. It is not "time out for repairs"; nor is it by any chance a rude exposure of his personality to public view. It is merely an open, kindly, genial invitation

to us to share with him such processes of his nature as are fitting for us to share, to halve them with us in order that we too may learn to travel with our own inwardness as a boon companion instead of keeping it always at arm's length.

In fact this poem, "Pasture," gives us one of our main clues in reading Robert Frost. Its twice-repeated line, "I sha'n't be gone long; You come too" might be taken as Frost's secret, if he has any secret, and as his poetic goal. "You come too" lies underneath his every line; the companionship that each of us may hold with all of us and that each of us may hold with essential reality; the expressional validity of life's togetherness, this is his substance of poetry and his definition of it. No wonder that his "Mending Wall" is, in my opinion, the greatest anti-war poem yet written:

> Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
> That wants it down . . . I see him there
> Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
> In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
> He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
> Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
> [But] he will not go beyond his father's saying . . .
> "Good fences make good neighbors."

Has anyone put in fewer words, more scathing words, the conflict between peace and war, between the habit of separateness by "good fences" and the togetherness which mankind calls Peace? The same thing is plain enough when in his dedication of *North of Boston* he writes only this: "To E.M.F. This Book of People."

This book of people! That is why we are reminded of Burns and Wordsworth when we read Robert Frost. All three are not simply and technically "men of the people" but "men of people"; nothing matters to them but people; the world is essentially just a box full of people; it is as Miranda says "a brave new world that hath such people in it."

It is in "The Pasture," a little eight-line verse, that we find these two qualities or methods of our poet; his asides or companionable talks with himself; and his wonder at the together-like possibilities hidden behind our commonplace tasks. To clear the pasture spring of its debris of heavy tradition and custom and "watch the water clear" is an infinite process. As history and progress take away our encased errors and our tiring monotonies, the stream may flow clean again and its eternal meaning shine out among us.

It is this meaning that Frost is forever discovering in the rocks of New England, in her blueberry patches, in her birches, in her country kitchens, in her "curled-up mountains," in her hired men who die in other men's homes, in her great men springing from very small towns—"Lancaster bore him,—such a small town;—such a great man," in her suppressed and oppressed women whose only view for years may be just a pine-encircled lake, "our Willoughby," or a lonely cemetery where a man who had dug his own baby's grave causes his wife to say:

> You could sit there with the stains on your shoes
> Of the fresh earth from your own baby's grave
> And talk of your everyday concerns.

It is this togetherness, this rockbottom democracy of personality that makes Frost unique. Walt Whitman of course has the same desire of unity with us, but he shouts it more noisily and wounds our tentacles before we can catch hold. Frost makes us catch hold without any aggressive putsch, wins his way into us as a smiling child conquers us.

To read Frost we must yield to his atmospheric pictures not only of his people but of New England itself. Its geography and localisms are not thrust at us nor described to us but are made to come very close and to say: Here we are; let us in. He does not represent New England, he is New England; maybe I am stealing that sentence from Amy Lowell. Little by little as we read him we are enfolded and absorbed by his countryside, our northeastern cradle. It becomes our possession with almost no effort of our own. I can imagine a man in New Mexico reading Frost, a man who has never seen New England. This stranger, if he will make the gradual yielding, can and will be as truly encompassed by New Hampshire, Vermont, and Boston as are we who for years have been molded by them.

In this connection it is awakening to know that every line of *North of Boston* was written in England. London and Sussex could not blow away the vital breath that made Robert Frost to be Robert Frost. It is equally surprising to know, and most people seem not to know, that he was born in San Francisco and did not see New England until his eleventh year when his widowed mother came back home to Lawrence, Massachusetts. He makes no reference anywhere to California except the brief comparison in his poem "New Hampshire":

> I met a Californian who would
> Talk California—a state so blessed,
> He said, in climate none ever died there
> A natural death. . . . That's what comes
> Of being in the market with a climate.

Nor is there any mention of his several years in England. Impregnated totally with New England he produces children only of that parentage. To expect anything else from him is an impossible anticipation. To refuse to surrender to his hilltop pasturebound spirit is to fail to catch his music and his meaning.

And yet it is scarcely a surrender that we are called upon to make. Rather is it just a willingness to "come too," a readiness to be absorbed. No battle is necessary, followed by capitulation. But rather an almost effortless, unconscious restful melting that captures us before we are aware. When he says, "You come too" we answer with unnoticed compulsion, "Yes, I'm coming." There is no exhibitionism in Frost. He does not try or seem to want to tell us anything. Least of all does he want to teach us anything. His whole intention is to say, "As we walk along this way this is what we see, what we hear." He trusts the seeing and hearing to do their own teaching and leaves it at that.

For instance, in that truly great poem, "The Death of the Hired Man," Frost does not describe the moonlight, does not ask us to be affected by it, yet how it colors the whole poem. He says that the moonlight was there, and we must say for ourselves all that needs to be said:

> Part of a moon was falling down the west,
> Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
> Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
> And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
> Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
> Taut with dew from garden bed to eaves,
> As if she played unheard the tenderness
> That wrought on him beside her in the night.
> "Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
> You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

This creative power which Frost seeks to share with us makes him essentially a poet to be read aloud. The

voice and tone are, almost, more compelling than the lines themselves. Pauses, waits, intonations, asides, accents, all are so interwoven with what he says that missing them we miss all. But here too there must be on the reader's part an entire absence of exhibitionism or affectation. No attempt should be made to imitate the "Yankee drawl," for Frost himself does not exaggerate it. Familiarity with the general abbreviations of New England speech, its quick insights and its slow responses, this may be necessary, but nothing more. What is necessary is an unconscious unity with the New Englandish processes behind the spoken words and an utter naturalness in letting those processes furnish their own tones and undertones.

Pure restfulness makes Frost more to be read aloud than is the case with most poets. There is no haste in his step, no confusion. In his view nature has all the time there is and our hurrying world is in the main a deceit. The eternity that is wrapped up in time is a true eternity and quite sufficient for us to travel in and travel toward.

To read Frost aloud in a very small group of desirous souls, or to just one person, is the best way to hear his interpretation of life. Perfection of reading, skill, practiced effort are not needed. Continued listening to him in company with others, no matter who does the reading, is the surest way to have the ultimate satisfaction of saying: I recognized his voice the moment I heard it. Not the reader's voice but Frost's voice, New England's voice, and then our own inward voice after that.

Writing many years ago Prof. J. F. Genung of Amherst College said that Robert Louis Stevenson had no philosophy of life, he had life itself. And this we may say of Frost. He displays at least no theory of existence, no showmanship of basic, hidden conceptions. To possess life is, as Santayana says of Columbus, "his only wisdom and his only art." It cannot be that Frost has no philosophy of life. No. But the original and compulsory oneness with life is the sole creator of any assumptions that he may hold about life. On his seventieth birthday he published his latest poem. Significantly enough it was on the Book of Job. That means that the problem of human suffering, or a philosophy of life, clamored for utterance. But even here, in "The Masque of Reason" it is the people, Job and his wife and that Other One Infinite Person, who transcend the philosophy of the poem. Frost goes so far as to make God himself say, "I think in proper names." So does Frost weave God into the mesh of human men and women that outside of that net God has no existence; at least if He does have such separate existence it can only be made real in contact with the fabric of the lives of men and women. In plain words Frost is still saying "You come too," saying it now to the Deity Himself; daring to say to God, "If you would clean the pasture spring of humanity, you better come too; and perhaps if you come you may stay to watch the water clear; it won't clear if you stay way-off there in the sky."

It is thus that Frost never lets go of his idea of togetherness. What a soul does with its togetherness, not what he does with his aloneness, as Professor Whitehead says, this constitutes his religion. Frost limits himself to New England. He knows that all music is a localized thing, not a universal babel of separate sounds. A bell, a violin, a flute, a trumpet are compressed agencies of harmony. Without compression, localization, limitation, there can be no music. Even God must localize and geographize himself if He wishes to be truly God. Out of New England, Frost digs his idea of localization. New England's integrity of space that produced a great theology, "such a small place, such great men and great ideas," like little Lancaster,—this is Frost's end of the road, his sequel to the country pasture spring and to "You come too."

Because he resides in a definite and small Somewhere-north-of-Boston he sees an everywhere beyond all compass points. He would say "If we are truly at home in our homes we cannot fail to be at home in a wild and baffling universe." If we are strangers to our neighbors we shall forever remain strangers to the Infinite. Good fences do not make good neighbors after all.

The Humanism of John Cowper Powys

GORDON CAULFEILD

We live perhaps in the most fascinating time in the whole history of human thought. Now in our time humanity at last begins to emerge from long ages of ignorance and false beliefs about itself into a bright new age of increasing factual knowledge and understanding. Today Humanism begins to become the final supreme intellectual focus of humanity.

Surely it is of great significance in our time that one of England's very finest authors should be a Humanist: John Cowper Powys, now at seventy-six, the grand old man of literature.

John Cowper Powys' greatness is well recognized today. A writer in Pryns Hopkins' former humanist quarterly, *Freedom,* in California, speaks of him as "one of the greatest English men-of-letters." In England Ernest Carr writing in *The Literary Guide* emphasizes that he "holds today a position unique in our literature." And have you read the truly wonderful tribute which America's great philosopher Will Durant pays in his sketch of Powys in his book, *Great Men of Literature,* subtitled "Adventures in Genius"?

John Cowper Powys gives us a fine example of his Humanism when he writes in *A Philosophy of Solitude* that "we can live happily without knowing whether there is a God; we can live worthily without knowing whether we survive death. Why torment ourselves any further then by going round and round in this treadmill circle?" And how like his brother this is, when Llewelyn Powys says, in his closing sentence of that eloquent volume, *The Pathetic Fallacy,* that "a wise man can do no better than to turn from the churches and look up through the airy majesty of the wayside trees with exultation, with resignation, at the unconquerable unimplicated sun." Or again, in *Swiss Essays,* where he feels that "there is nothing better for us to do than to plot for our own happiness, for the happiness of our companions, for the happiness of the whole human race."

One vital quality in a Humanist is his or her appreciation of the precious and thrilling beauty and significance and value of human life. A true Humanist does possess in high degree what I call "human feeling": an attitude toward others and an intellectual and emotional quality of interest in and feeling toward and reverence of fellow human beings. John Cowper Powys certainly possesses this quality. He gives us an outstanding instance of his "human feeling" in his book, *In Defence of Sensuality,* with his striking concern, so rare and ignored in our society today, for thousands of his fellow humans with "living, empty, anthropoid bellies." I have read indeed that when he spoke on the public platform he was, with the sincerity and intensity of his utterances, probably the one most deeply moving personality in either America or England.

Two years ago when an article of mine stressed the vital importance of "human feeling" in the human personality, it was John Cowper Powys who wrote to me: "I am entirely in agreement with you in regard to what you say about human feeling."

Yes, Humanism in its devotion to humanity is indeed our highest ideal in life. Significantly, so great an author as John Cowper Powys, who also possesses rich "human feeling" for humanity, is a Humanist. It certainly promises well for Humanism that our race today has raised this author and his "human feeling" and his Humanism to such a high pinnacle of acceptance and admiration and respect.

The Study Table

Housing

THE NEGRO GHETTO. *By Robert C. Weaver. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 404 pp. $3.75.*

This is an up-to-the-minute book for Chicagoans, and for all people in the North. It deals with housing—one of the most acute problems facing this country.

Dr. Weaver is a brilliant, young economist who gives facts and figures. He shows that segregation is an economic evil. He is not a moralizer and says that stress on the moral issue (he is quite aware that there is a moral issue) "has tended to divert attention from the economic motivations and institutions that must be recognized and understood if we are to comprehend the nature of social problems and plan for their solution."

He shows by statistics and tables, charts and maps that the housing situation is constantly getting worse—everywhere. Not many government officials, or real estate operators, seem much concerned about housing for anybody—least of all for colored people.

Dr. Weaver gives a history of Negro migration from the South to Harlem, to Chicago, to Detroit, and to other Northern cities. He paints the picture of the Negro Ghetto within which all classes of Negroes are hemmed in and jammed together. People of the highest intellectual attainments, important businessmen and women, insurance executives, people of wealth—all have to be crowded together.

There are two principal reasons for this crowding. First, there is not enough housing for any group. Second, white Americans do not want colored Americans living in so-called white neighborhoods.

Our interracial committees and our real estate operators might profit, morally and economically, by reading the chapter on "Economic Facts and Fallacies About the Negro Ghetto" or "Urban Redevelopment—Threat or an Opportunity."

We must first compel our governments—national, state, and local—to act on this crucial matter of housing. And immediately houses begin to go up, we must act to destroy segregation.

Many white people think that if we wipe out segregation Negroes will at once "invade" every block. The fact is that in Chicago Negroes live now in almost every ward. But it is difficult to get many Negroes to move out of the Ghetto—much as they despise it. Their friends are there, their churches and clubs are there, their favorite hairdresser is there. Whites need have no fear that Negroes will "take over" the city. But they must have more space. Slums breed crime, disease, and all sorts of evils. Our whole social life will be richer and more healthy when we destroy segregation. In our cities we must fulfill the promise of democracy: equal rights (a decent place to live) for all. As Christians we must agree with Father George Dunne, "Segregation is a sin."

This is an exceedingly valuable book, which all who are interested in better race relations should read and have at hand for reference.

JAMES M. YARD.

A New Translation of Dante

DANTE: THE DIVINE COMEDY. *A New Translation by Laurence Grant White. New York: Pantheon Books. $6.50. 188 pp.*

Americans have read and studied Dante's great work, *The Divine Comedy,* in American translation since 1843. Thomas Parsons produced the first American translation, but his work was forgotten when Longfellow published his version. Since Longfellow's time there have been many translations, but none superior to this by the eminent mediaeval scholar, Laurence Grant White. The blank verse of Mr. White is distinctly an improvement over that of Longfellow. This translation is important for another reason: there is a distinct new interest today in mediaeval literature, and colleges are rapidly adding courses in this subject. This translation is ideal for such courses, since the language is direct, simple, and always clear. No poem except Homer's *Odyssey* has had the appeal which *The Divine Comedy* had for those interested in a journey through the realm of the dead. Today that appeal is increasing. Another reason why Dante is read widely today lies in the fact that he was not only the greatest poet of the mediaeval period but he was also the greatest literary critic of his time. An added feature of this excellent book is that Gustave Doré's famous illustrations are again reproduced. Dante named his great work a comedy; his friends added the word Divine. The addition has never been questioned. Pantheon Books is to be congratulated on publishing this book.

C. A. HAWLEY.

Western Unitarian Conference

RANDALL S. HILTON, Executive Secretary
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REGIONAL PAPERS

The Middle Atlantic States Council of Unitarian Churches has published a booklet under the title of *Regional Papers,* which includes three addresses given at the Middle Atlantic States Regional Convention held at Pocono Crest in October. The three addresses were "Understanding Religious Freedom," by Dr. Arthur E. Murphy, Cornell University; "Thinking and Action in Liberal Religion," by Dr. Eduard C. Lindeman, Columbia University; "Unitarian Opportunities," by Mr. H. M. Warren, former member of the Board of the American Unitarian Association. These are three very excellent addresses. They can be obtained for 25c through the Western Conference Office.

MARSHALL DIMOCK

Dr. Marshall E. Dimock was the principal speaker at the New Hampshire Unitarian Association Conference in Portsmouth last fall. Dr. Dimock, formerly a member of the church at Evanston, was banquet speaker at the Western Unitarian Conference in May, 1947.

JOHN CLARK

Rev. John Clark, former minister at Rockford and Navy Chaplain, has begun his work as minister of the Unitarian Church at Concord, New Hampshire. He will also be Associate Regional Director of the New England Unitarian Council for New Hampshire. For the past two years Mr. Clark has been working on his doctorate at Meadville and the University of Chicago.

JOHN HAYWARD

At the March convocation of the University of Chicago the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred upon John Hayward. Mr. Hayward is a Meadville graduate and former Navy Chaplain. He is now minister of the Unitarian Church at Columbus, Ohio.

JOHN BOOTH

John Nicholls Booth, for five years minister of the Unitarian Church in Evanston, returned in February from a trip around the world. While on his trip he interviewed such world notables as Hu Shih and Nehru. He visited the Philippines, Japan (where he helped organize a Unitarian Fellowship), China, India, Tibet, and Egypt. Mr. Booth began an interim ministry at Belmont, Massachusetts, on April 1.

ST. LOUIS

The First Unitarian Church of St. Louis has purchased the residence next door to the church for the purpose of expanding its church school and youth activities. The new acquisition provides thirteen additional rooms.

FLINT

Under the leadership of Leon Land the Flint church has been carrying on a very active program. It sponsored a large public meeting with Dr. Preston Bradley as the speaker on February 25. Dr. Frederick May Eliot spoke to an all church meeting on March 1. The Social Action Committee is sponsoring a radio program called "Pro and Con" at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays over station WMRP.

DES MOINES

The first Unitarian Church of Des Moines has called Rev. Charles W. Phillips. Mr. Phillips begins his ministry in the very near future. He will have full charge of the services during the month of May at which time the services will be broadcast over station WHO. Prior to his coming to the Des Moines Unitarian church, Mr. Phillips was a Disciples minister.

KNOXVILLE

Under the leadership of Rev. Lon Ray Call, former Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, a new Unitarian church has been organized in Knoxville, Tennessee. Beginning April 1, Rev. Grant Butler, former minister at Des Moines and now Minister-at-Large for the American Unitarian Association, will continue the leadership provided by the Association. An invitation has been extended to the new Knoxville church to join the Western Unitarian Conference.

MRS. LEON LAND

Lavonne W. Land, wife of Rev. Leon Rosser Land, minister of the Unitarian church at Flint, Michigan, died on March 19 after a long illness. During most of her life she was very active in religious and social work. She was at times professionally employed in these fields but the larger part of her active life was given to voluntary assistance in the churches where her husband served in the Bronx Free Fellowship and in the U.S.O. Funeral services were held in Flint and burial in Wananish, North Carolina.

CHANNING SEMINAR

The Midwest Channing Foundation sponsored a week-end seminar at Urbana, Illinois, April 2-3. The Urbana Channing Club, under the leadership of Rev. Arnold Westwood, arranged for an inspiring and entertaining program.

JEFFERSON WESTWOOD

Rev. and Mrs. Arnold Westwood of Urbana, Illinois, announced the arrival of a son, Jefferson, March 22. They have one other son, John.

COLORADO SPRINGS

An overall building program has been undertaken. The first completed project was the redecoration of the church parlors.

KANSAS CITY

Plans are under way for major improvements of both the exterior and interior of the church building.

MADISON

The First Unitarian Society of Madison has called Rev. Fred Cairns of Needham, Massachusetts. Mr. Cairns begins his ministry at Madison on May 1.

GENEVA 1949

More information is now available on the Geneva Summer Institute to be held at College Camp, Wisconsin,

August 28-September 4. Among the most interesting items is the fact that there would be no increase in the rates. The rates will be the same as last year, starting at $26.75 and increasing according to the accommodations desired. The registration fee is $5.00 per person (under three years, $2.50). As announced earlier, Dr. Sunder Joshi will give the morning lectures. Other members of the adult faculty include Dr. Homer Jack, Dr. Malcolm Knowles, Mrs. Dudley Moore, Rev. Clifton Hoffman, Mrs. D. Gilman Taylor (Alliance), Rev. Dale DeWitt (Ministers' Seminar).

GENEVA A.U.Y.

The A.U.Y. program for Geneva has now been completed. The general theme will be "Does Unitarianism Have the Answers?" The speaker for the High School group will be Rev. Fred Cairns; for the college group Dr. Jacob Trapp. Among the A.U.Y. faculty not previously announced will be Mr. Wilder Crane, Dr. Homer Jack, Rev. John Brigham, and Rev. Clifton Hoffman.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

The Western Unitarian Conference will meet at the People's Liberal Church, Chicago. For the program see the FIELD, page 2.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

The Unitarian Religious Service

It is an hour set aside for refreshment and for discovering in ourselves the various latent energies and resources released when the heart is right, for receiving help in meeting problems, for guidance, for the tasting of new experiences (as one tastes in the classical drama and literature), for hope, courage, joy. This service is an opening to the understanding and appreciation of the natural and human world surrounding us. Through it should come profound thoughts from the philosophers, helpful words from the psychologists of mental health, some of the worldly-wise humanism of the masters of the pen as well as help from the spirit-wise but little known mystics of the world's great religions. Through this opening should flow an increasing understanding of what is happening within our ever-changing and tumultuous social system. And through this opening we should get visions of bigness among men, of the tenderness of the human relationship, and at times glimpse dazzling rays from the vast and almost totally unexplored realms of the beautiful.

We are not a flock of sheep with a ministerial shepherd; what we are beggars description. You grow, your minister also grows; each stimulates and inspires and conditions the other. Together in a very real sense we create an organic body larger than any one of us. And in it and through it each becomes something greater. We are beings of infinite possibility travelling the labyrinthine ways of an infinite universe; we are progressing from mystery to mystery.

"All before us lies the way."

R. Lester Mondale.

The Power of Laughter

We all tend to take ourselves too seriously. Laughter, whether our own or others, can help as nothing else can to enable us to keep a proper sense of proportion and perspective. Laughter, indeed, has been one of the great instruments of human advance, making people aware of folly in their ideas or conduct when everything else had failed. Without laughter, reverence becomes bigotry or pompousness, stupidity becomes sacrosanct, and progress may well be stifled.

When piety or conviction becomes ridiculous, whether it be our own or others, he who laughs renders a genuine service to true piety and truth by his laughter. Yet one would do well to avoid hurting others by his laughter, and to remember that humor can be divine if it be tender and compassionate.

Robert Weston.

Springtime in the Rockies

Last night the temperature dropped. It began to snow, a wet, sticky snow, the kind we need in spring. It piled up fast and clung to every bare branch and limb, turning the whole scene into one of those fairy-lands for which springtime in the Rockies is famous. This morning the sun worked hard to push the clouds back and by noon the solar victory was complete. His blue banner was spread over all the sky. The fast disappearing snow went trickling down in refreshing draughts to parched throats. Crocuses and daffodils poked their green heads up everywhere. A robin perched himself in the top of the highest tree and chirped with all his might. I had not been out long until I began to catch the spirit of it all and realized that we, too, are a part of nature and the unending drama of creation.

Hurley B. Begun.

Toward a Higher Religion

What we must realize is that religion has to keep step with knowledge or we find ourselves in just such a predicament as we have now, where our emotional patterns are turned to the Middle Ages and our technology to atomic energy. It is terribly important for our salvation that we move toward a higher religion that is in harmony with science, and at home in the universe of science.

We know that there is resistance to this religious advance. It involves a considerable amount of change in an area where it hurts . . . the area of emotion. We always tend to feel that any change may be a change for the worse, that we may lose what security we have now, no matter how little it may be. Religious orthodoxy and the conservative tendencies of people fight tooth and nail against any movement that would shake the creaking foundations of the old beliefs. Yet, this resistance is sheer madness, creating one of the deepest cultural crises of our age. The human race simply has to learn how to face reality, and that is all there is to it.

Jack Mendelsohn, Jr.

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